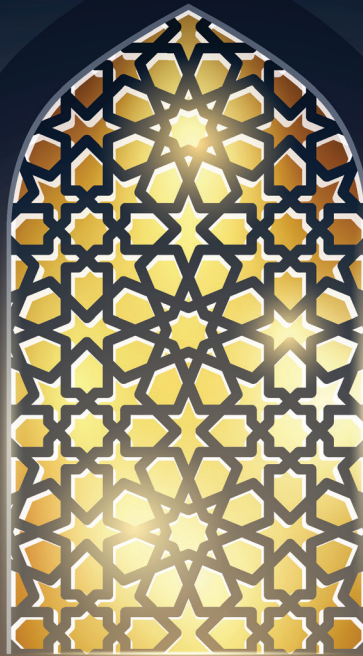


In the Latter Days, the sun shall rise from the West

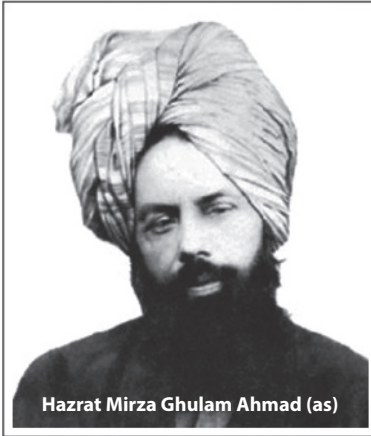
— Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)



How to Win God's Love in Five Steps

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The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as)



AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjab province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (the Mahdi and Messiah).

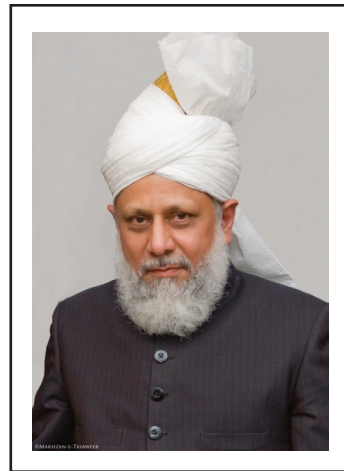
The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam: peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God-in its pristine purity.

Hazrat Ahmad (as) proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: "The religion of the people of the right path" (The Holy Qur'an: 98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qura'nic teaching:

"There is no compulsion in religion" (the Holy Qur'an: 2:257).

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

The Community has been led by the elected successors of Hazrat Ahmad (as). The present Head of the Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul-Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah (as).



Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul-Masih V (aba)

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The Muslim Sunrise

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Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (ra) was the first Ahmadi Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921. He founded the *Muslim Sunrise*, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever-changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presents their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

The *Muslim Sunrise* welcomes letters to the Editor, questions, and submissions.

Email us at contact@muslimsunrise.com or go online to www.MuslimSunrise.com



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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer '*Alaihis-Salam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *Radiyallahu 'Anhu/a* or 'may God be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text in order to facilitate reading, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Acronyms for salutations used in this publication

- sa: Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)
as: 'Alaihis-Salam (may peace be upon him)
ra: Radiyallahu 'Anhu/'Anha (may Allah be pleased with him/her)
rh: Rahimahullahu Ta'ala (may Allah shower His mercy on him)
aba: Ayyadahullahu Ta'ala Bi-Nasrihil-'Aziz (may Allah support him with His mighty help)

Verse numbers in the references from the Holy Qur'an count Tasmiya at the beginning of a chapter as the first verse.

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What is the Love of Allah?



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FROM THE HOLY QUR'AN



Say, if your fathers, and your sons, and your brethren, and your wives, and your kinsfolk, and the wealth you have acquired, and the trade whose dullness you fear, and the dwellings which you love are dearer to you than Allah and His Messenger and striving in His cause, then wait until Allah comes with His judgement; and Allah guides not the disobedient people.

The Holy Qur'an (9: 24)

قُلْ إِنْ كَانَ آبَاؤُكُمْ وَأَبْنَاؤُكُمْ
وَإِخْوَانُكُمْ وَأَزْوَاجُكُمْ وَعَشِيرَتُكُمْ
وَأَمْوَالٌ اقْتَرَفْتُمُوهَا وَتِجَارَةٌ تَخْشَوْنَ
كَسَادَهَا وَمَسْكِنٌ تَرْضَوْنَهَا أَحَبَّ
إِلَيْكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَجِهَادٍ فِي
سَبِيلِهِ فَتَرَبَّصُوا حَتَّى يَأْتِيَ اللَّهُ بِأَمْرِهِ
وَاللَّهُ لَا يَهْدِي الْقَوْمَ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٤﴾

SAYING OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD (sa)

Narrated by Ibn 'Abbas

"The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said:
'Love Allah for what He nourishes you with of His Blessings, love
me due to the love of Allah, and love the people of my house
due to love of me.'"

Jami`at-Tirmidhi, Vol. 1, Book 46, Hadith 3789



EDITORIAL

FEBRUARY 2022

The Holy Qur'an makes it clear that God did not create humans in vain (The Holy Qur'an 23:116). The purpose of human life is to reflect God's attributes in one's heart and express them through one's actions, and thus to become one with God. The Holy Qur'an asks us to say: "We take the colors (attributes) of God; and who is fairer than God's colors (attributes), and Him alone do we worship." (The Holy Qur'an 2:139). The strongest foundation to attain this relationship with God is through love. One of God's attributive names is "Al-Wadood," the Most Loving. The Holy Qur'an says: "And seek forgiveness of your Lord; then turn to Him. Verily, my Lord is Merciful, Most Loving." (The Holy Qur'an 11:91).

God loves His creation, especially the humans, and we, the humans, men and women both, have to reciprocate His love by loving Him above all worldly things and loving His creation as well. Our real and true love is for God, and all other loves are its reflections, expressing our connections with others and feeling together with them.

In this issue of the Muslim Sunrise, there is an article about the Divine attributes, and another article answers the question: Does God love us back? In addition, we have selected five steps, out of many, that may be undertaken to win the love of God:

1. Causing no harm to anyone
2. Staying away from committing sin
3. Giving charity in the way of God
4. Establishing peace and justice in society; and
5. Remaining patient and steadfast during trials.

Please read and enjoy the articles and send us your feedback.

Mubasher Ahmad
Editor-in-Chief

أَفَحَسِبْتُمْ
أَنَّمَا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ
عَبَثًا
وَأَنَّا كُنتُمُ الْإِنَّا
لَا تُرْجَعُونَ

'Did you then
THINK
that
We had
CREATED
you without
PURPOSE,
and that you would
not be brought back
to Us?'

IN THE WORDS OF THE PROMISED MESSIAH(as)

Experiencing the Divine Attributes of God

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian
(may peace be upon him)

When a person experiences in the shape of Beneficence those Divine attributes which constitute His Beauty, his faith is strengthened beyond measure and he is drawn towards God as iron is drawn towards a magnet. His love for God increases manifold and his trust in God becomes very strong. Having experienced that all his good is in God, his hopes in God are strengthened. He continues to incline towards God naturally, without pretence and affectation, and finds himself dependent upon God's help every moment and believes firmly through the contemplation of Divine attributes that he will be successful, because he has experienced in his own person many instances of God's grace, favour and generosity. Therefore, his supplications proceed from the fountain of power and certainty and his resolve becomes extremely firm and unshakable.

In the end, having observed Divine favours and bounties, the light of certainty enters with great force into him and his ego is altogether consumed. On account of the frequent contemplation of the greatness and power of God, his heart becomes the House of God. As the human soul never leaves his body while a person is alive, in the same way, the certainty that enters into him from God, the Mighty and Glorious, never leaves him. The Holy Spirit surges inside him all the time, and he speaks under the

instruction of this very Spirit. Verities and insights flow out of him and the tent of the Lord of Honour and Majesty is ever set in his heart. The delight of certainty, sincerity, and love flows through him like water whereby every limb of his is nourished. His eyes exhibit the brightness of nourishment and his forehead reveals its light. His countenance appears as if it had been washed by the rain of Divine love and his tongue partakes fully of this freshness. All his limbs exhibit a brightness, as after a spring shower an attractive freshness is revealed in the branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits of trees.

The body of a person on whom this spirit has not descended and who has not been refreshed by it is like a corpse. This freshness and joyousness cannot be described in words and can never be acquired by the dead heart which has not been refreshed by the fountain of the light of certainty. On the contrary, it stinks. But the one who has been bestowed this light, and inside whom this fountain has burst forth, exhibits as one of his signs that all the time and in everything, in every word, and in every action, he receives power from God. This is his delight and his comfort and he cannot live without it.

Reference:

Review of Religions-Urdu, Vol. I, pp. 186-187; The Essence of Islam, Vol. I, pp 91-92



Do Not Cause Harm to Anyone

Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad,
Khalifatul-Masih V (aba)

(Extracts from “Conditions of Bai’at and Responsibilities of an Ahmadi”)

It has been stated in the fourth condition that one should not cause harm to another person whether by one’s hand or one’s tongue or through any other means. I will now explain this condition of bai’at. From the saying of the Holy Prophet (sa) that I have presented before, you should focus on the words ‘do not be jealous.’ Jealousy ultimately develops into enmity. A person who has jealousy in his heart always wants to harm the person of whom he is jealous. Jealousy is a type of disease that while it causes harm to the other person, it also consumes the person who is jealous. It gives rise to many other petty feelings of spite, such as: why the other person has a better business, or more wealth or more talented children. In the case of women, jealousy may arise because of someone’s better jewelry. Even in religious matters—where good deeds must be appreciated and where people should try to move forward in rendering service to the religion—efforts are made to place obstacles in the way of those who are rendering religious service by making accusations against them so that they, too, are deprived of performing service to the religion.

Then the Holy Prophet (sa) admonishes us not to quarrel with each other. Quarrels take place over petty matters. To give an example, sometimes an officer on duty warns a child who has been mischievous in a gathering that if he were to do it again he would be dealt with firmly or be corrected. The parents, sitting nearby, immediately roll up their sleeves for a fight, and the person performing the duty is put down in a terrible

way. Through this action of theirs, they not only broke a condition of bai’at and spoiled their good manners, they also banished from the minds of their next generation the respect for the organization of the Jama’at and the distinction between good and bad. Then we are directed not to have enmity towards each other. Enmities start from petty matters. Hearts are filled with spite and malice. Some people are always on the lookout for an opportunity to avenge them, while the instruction is not to have enmity with, nor malice for, anyone. Once a Companion (ra) humbly asked the Holy Prophet (sa) to give him simple, but unforgettable advice in a few words. The Holy Prophet (sa) advised him to ‘shun anger’ and then again he said, ‘shun anger.’ When you keep in your mind that you should shun anger, then malice and spite will go away automatically.

Another habit of ‘injuring or harming someone, or making another person’s deal go sour’ is to overbid on a contract concluded by the other. In this saying, we have been asked to desist from such actions. A higher price is offered to acquire a thing only to bring the other person’s business down while no personal gain is achieved from such a bid. This also applies to proposals for marriage. Ahmadis should keep that prohibition in mind.

Then the admonishment is not to oppress anyone, not to think low of anyone, nor to derogate anyone. An oppressor never achieves nearness to Allah. Then, how

is it possible that on the one hand one would enter into a pledge of allegiance with the one appointed by Allah to win His favor and on the other one would oppress people by snatching their rights. It is a common practice in our villages not to give brothers their rights, not to give sisters their share of inheritance simply because they have been married to a different family, lest the property move out of the family, There are those that oppress their wives, those that do not respect their rights, and there are wives who do not respect the rights of their husbands.

I would now present to you some ahadith that illustrate what the Companions (ra) of the Holy Prophet (sa) did in not taking these matters lightly and what changes they made in themselves after they had accepted Islam.

Hadrat Abu Dhar al-Ghaffarira used to provide drinking water from his tank. Some members of a family came by. One of them asked the others as to which of them would go to Abu Dharra to hold him by his hair and ask him to render an account of himself. One of them said that he would do it. He went over to Abu Dharra when he was standing near the tank. He started questioning him. Abu Dharra, who was standing at this time, sat down and then he lay down. One of them asked him, 'Abu Dharra, why did you sit down and then why did you lie down?' He replied that, 'the Holy Prophet (sa) told us, "When anger overcomes one of you while he is standing he should sit down so that this anger would subside; failing that, he should lie down" (1).

In another hadith the narrator states that: We were sitting in the company of 'Urwah Bin Muhammad when a man came by. He started talking in a manner that angered 'Urwah Bin Muhammad. The narrator states that when his anger boiled, he got up. After performing ablution, he came back to them. He told us that he had heard of a narration passed down by his father through his grandfather, 'Atiyyah, who was a Companion of the Holy Prophet (sa), that the Holy Prophet (sa) had said: "Anger comes from Satan. Satan was made from the fire, and fire is put out by water; so when one of you gets angry, he should perform the ablution" (2).

Hadrat Ziyad Bin 'Alaqah (ra), on the basis of a narration provided by his uncle Hadrat Qatbah Bin Malikra that the Holy Prophet (sa) used to supplicate, "O my Allah, I seek thy refuge from bad morals, evil deeds and evil desires" (3).

I now present before you what [Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad] the Promised Messiah (as) said in this regard and what he expects of the members of the Jama'at. [Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad] The Promised Messiah (as) says:

The members of my Jama'at, wherever they might be, should listen with attention. The purpose of their joining this Movement and establishing the mutual relationship of spiritual preceptor and disciple with me is that they should achieve a high degree of good conduct, good behavior and righteousness. No wrongdoing, mischief, or misconduct should even approach them. They should perform the five daily Prayers regularly, should not utter a falsehood and should not hurt anyone with their speech. They should be guilty of no vice and should not let even a thought of any mischief, or wrong, or disorderliness, or turmoil pass through their minds. They should shun every type of sin, offence, undesirable action, passion, and unmannerly behavior. They should become pure-hearted and meek servants of God Almighty, and no poisonous germ should flourish in their beings. Sympathy with mankind should be their principle and, they should fear God Almighty. They should safeguard their tongues and their hands and their thoughts against every kind of impurity, disorderliness and dishonesty. They should join the five daily Prayer services without fail. They should refrain from every kind of wrong, transgression, dishonesty, bribery, trespass, and partiality. They should not participate in any evil company. If it should be proved that one who frequents their company does not obey God's commandments... or is not mindful of the rights of people, or is cruel or mischievous, or is ill-behaved, or is seeking to deceive the servants of God Almighty by speaking ill or abusively of them, or is guilty of imposture towards the persons with whom they have entered into a covenant of bai'at, it should be their duty to repel him and to keep away from such a dangerous one. They should not design harm against the followers of any religion or the members of any tribe or group. Be true well-wishers of everyone, and

the followers of any religion or the members of any tribe or group. Be true well-wishers of everyone, and take care that no mischievous, vicious, disorderly, or ill-behaved person, should be ever of your company, or should dwell among you; for such a person could at any time be the cause of your stumbling. These are matters and conditions that I have been urging from the beginning, and it is the duty of every member of my Jama'at to act upon them. You should indulge in no impurity, mockery or derision. Walk upon the earth with good hearts, pure tempers, and pure thoughts. Not every evil is worth fighting, so cultivate the habit of forgiveness and overlooking defaults, and behave with steadfastness and meekness. Do not attack anyone improperly, and keep your passions under complete control. If you take part in a discussion, or in an exchange of views on a religious subject, express yourself gently and be courteous. If anyone misbehaves towards you, withdraw from such company with a greeting of peace. If you are persecuted or reviled, be mindful that you should not meet stupidity with stupidity, for otherwise you will be counted in the same category as your opponents. God Almighty desires that you should become a Jama'at that should set an example of goodness and truthfulness for the whole world. Hasten to exclude everyone from your company who sets an example of

evil, mischief, provocation and ill-behavior. He who cannot dwell among us in meekness, goodness and piety, using gentle words and comporting himself in ways of good conduct, should depart from us quickly, for God does not desire that such a one should dwell among us. He will die miserably, for he did not adopt the way of goodness. Therefore, be alert, and be truly good-hearted, gentle and righteous. You will be recognised by your regular attendance at Prayer services and your high moral qualities. He who has the seed of evil embedded in him will not be able to conform to this admonition (4).

He further said: "A man should not be conceited, nor indecent, nor ill-mannered towards the fellow beings. He should act with love and goodness and should not bear ill-will towards anyone for personal reasons. He should behave firmly or gently in accordance with the occasions or conditions"(5).

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Reflecting Attributes Of Allah In Our Heart

Aasim Ahmad

Belief in God is a universally known concept. Immanuel Kant observed that the seeming universality of the belief in God is one of the greatest proofs of the existence of God. The belief in God is rooted in every culture that ever existed (1). Nonetheless, as we ponder over the existence of God, the Creator, we naturally desire to know more about Him and His characteristics or attributes.

We can imagine that God has many attributes. However, throughout religious history, we notice most religions only describe a few of them. It is unique to Islam that God revealed a long list of His perfect attributes. Naturally, perfection is viewed within the constraints of the human condition since our perfect God is not limited in any way by any set of attributes. Based on this understanding of God's limitlessness, we can say that these specific attributes we have come to know and will discuss here, are for our benefit and understanding. As our Creator, which itself is an attribute of God, God communicates to His creation only for its benefit. Thus, as we discuss these beautiful attributes of Allah, we must understand them in terms of how they can deepen and strengthen our relationship with our beloved God.

God says in the Qur'an: "And to Allah alone belong all perfect attributes. So, call on Him by these. And leave alone those who deviate from the right way with respect to His attributes. They shall be repaid for what they do" (2).

As a personal reflection, when I read about God's perfect attributes, I am reminded of a more ancient belief in Forms. I am referencing the Platonic concept of Forms. Muslims believe that Socrates was undoubtedly a prophet of God and a source of pride for the Greek people. Therefore, it is not entirely surprising that a pupil of Socrates, Plato, would have some concept of perfect attributes or Forms in his mind. One can only imagine that Socrates held some belief in perfect attributes of God that was then re-defined to some extent by his pupil. The idea that

everything in the earth is a representation of some innate attribute is undoubtedly a derivative of the Islamic determination of God's perfect attributes having manifested in His creation: "Hast thou not seen that it is Allah Whose praises all who are in the heavens and the earth celebrate, and so do the birds with their wings outspread? Each one knows his own mode of prayer and praise. And Allah knows well what they do" (3).

It is no stretch of the imagination to accept the notion that all created things in our universe would reflect one or many attributes of the Perfect God. Most religions past and present, and Islam, currently, contain this universal teaching in the one perfect God who has many attributes to help us attain nearness to Him. Having defined His magnificent attributes through Islam to Prophet Muhammad (sa), God has made it easy for man to understand what to strive for and to imitate to achieve success.

Following the guidance of the Qur'anic verse cited, we understand that we ought to "call on Him (Allah) by these (His attributes)" (2). Thus, if God instructs us to reference His attributes when calling on Him for whatever we may need, this clearly indicates the importance of our relationship to God's attributes. These attributes are genuine, to be kept close within our hearts. This requires an emotional relationship. When reflecting on the exquisite attributes of Allah, we see how easy it is to capture these attributes in our hearts in two ways.

Allah's attributes are not only characteristics that we may endeavor to adopt in our lives but, also in their divine sense, are those attributes wherein we fall to the ground prostrate begging Allah for His infinite means of support. Although we try to emulate many of these attributes in our ways, we must always recognize Allah as the trustworthy source and reality behind these attributes. For example, although a doctor may desire to heal others and therefore manifest Allah's attribute of the Healer, he also

understands that it is only Allah that cures. If Allah wants a person to be healed, it will be so. Otherwise, the best of physicians will undoubtedly fail. Therefore, this person who strives in the way of Allah to heal persons must nevertheless fall prostrate in prayer, since he knows only Allah truly heals.

This personal and spiritual connection with Allah's attributes exists whether one recognizes it or not. All good things on this earth are represented in Allah's beautiful and inspiring attributes. Thus, we cannot help but begin to reflect Allah's attributes in our hearts and souls if we desire good things.

The Qur'an says: "Bad things are for bad men, and bad men are for bad things. And good things are for good men, and good men are for good things; these are innocent of all that they (the calumniators) allege. For them is forgiveness and an honorable provision" (4).

Those who pursue the good and are good themselves will have good things with them. There is genuinely no separating the path of Allah and the path of goodness. Any person in this life, in whatever capacity, may it be a judge, lawyer, policeman, teacher, manager, business owner, or public employee, will depend on some attribute of Allah whether it be the Just, the Merciful, the All-Knowing, the All-Wise, the Guardian, the Sustainer, or the Self-Subsisting. Reflecting these attributes in our hearts means achieving the happiness that material success alone is incapable of providing. The wise person who succeeds in life is the one who ponders over and remembers these attributes, and then does his utmost to adopt them in his life.

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3. The Holy Qur'an (24:42)
4. The Holy Qur'an (24:27)



Does God Love us Back?

Iffat Mirza

Whether platonic, parental, or romantic, unrequited love has been discussed extensively. The poets and philosophers have tried to put it into words, and the old stories have consistently explored this phenomenon. Many have wondered if love will always be one-sided after so many worldly experiences of loving one another and the potential of losing the loved one. Or if not one-sided, we are at least left to ponder if love is genuinely ever eternal? After all, even the strongest love of all cannot cross the boundaries of death.

These are bleak thoughts and perhaps some that one would be keen to avoid dwelling upon too much. They make for quite a lonely existence. Finding comfort in belief in a benevolent or helpful God is not uncommon for many people when they come to this realization. The Holy Qur'an says that even women and children are a "provision of the present life, but it is Allah with Whom is an excellent home" (1). One study conducted in 1990 stated that "the concept of 'A Wrathful God' was related positively to loneliness, a belief merely in the existence of God was independent of it. 'A Helpful God' showed a negative correlation with loneliness" (2).

It is interesting to note how our perception of God impacts how we see ourselves and our place in the world. Indeed, dealing with the world's loneliness is not an easy task. It has plagued humanity for thousands of years. It essentially culminated in the atheists' version of Existentialism: the belief that we are responsible for our actions as existing beings, which is far more limiting than freeing if we have no definitive source of a moral code. His Holiness Mirza Tahir Ahmad (ra), the fourth head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, wrote in his book "Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge, and Truth" about the impact of such beliefs. He writes:

"Wrong as we may consider Sartre's explanation, we must pay homage to his fiery outburst of desperation

and vengefulness. This applies far more befittingly to Sartre himself, who may have suffered pangs of anguish and exasperation in the emptiness of his Godless philosophy. But all said and done, Sartre fails to distinguish between inspiration and revelation, terms that do not exist in his philosophy; what does exist is the agony of soul, a tongue of fire that leaps out in occasional outbursts of desperation. No revelation descends from on high, whatever rises, rises from the depth of human frustration" (3).

Taking Sartre's case as an example, and his Holiness' explanation of this specific aspect, it is interesting to see how and why Sartre comes to this 'pang of anguish'; the God that his philosophy is in opposition to is incoherent and wrathful (His Holiness writes that the atheistic philosophers such as Sartre and Nietzsche "knew no God, other than the God of the Christian dogma and it was Him that his [Nietzsche's] sword of reason had murdered") (4). It would have been interesting to consider if similar conclusions would have come about if they were more familiar with Islamic theology. But, of course, one can never know for sure.

Islamic scripture is indeed explicit in telling us that the nature of God is loving and is eternal. Thus, the anguish of having a desire to have everlasting love while acknowledging that nothing is eternal is mitigated. At least in loving God, we can guarantee eternal love. Now the question is only if He would love us back, or is this just one more unrequited love?

With every chapter of the Holy Qur'an beginning with the words 'In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Ever-Merciful,' there is very little doubt of God's ability to love humanity, despite its flaws and errors.

The question of reciprocal love came to the mainstream discussion in Islam thanks to the Sufis. Looking to the Ahadith (sayings of the Holy Prophet (sa)) as well as the Holy Qur'an, the Sufis turned to the

very language used to justify the belief that the love between a man and God is reciprocal. Lexical analysis is offered by Professor Giuseppe Scattolin and Dr. Ahmed Hasan Anwar in their essay where it is written: "reciprocity in love is highlighted in such sayings of the Holy Prophet (sa) also by the usage of the reciprocal verbal form 'mutual love' (*tahābba*) and the almost technical expression 'the mutual lovers in God' (*al-muthābbuna fī-llāh*)" (5).

This idea is monumental in one's belief in God. Indeed, the Holy Qur'an clearly states: "And you cannot frustrate the designs of Allah in the earth or the heaven; nor have you any friend or helper besides Allah." So clearly, so beautifully has it been written: Allah is our Friend. The sincerest Friend. The one without whom we are truly lost. But how does one love the perfect Being in a way that honors Him? Is it even possible? (6).

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, defines love in these words, "love is no pretense or ritualistic, rather it is a faculty among human faculties. Its reality is that the heart likes something and is drawn to it. Just as the real qualities of something are made evident when it reaches a state of excellence, so is the case of love. Its treasures are made apparent when it reaches its climax and highest point [...] The greater the love, the more one is naturally drawn to the qualities of his beloved so

much so that he becomes an image of the beloved. This is also the indication when a man loves God, he attains God's light on a reflective basis in accordance with his own powers" (7).

In the Holy Qur'an, God is quite explicit about His nature. With names ranging from As-Salam (The Source of Peace) to Al-Ghafoor (The One Who Forgives), God shows different manifestations of love towards His creation (8). Therefore, we achieve piety and meekness by embodying these characteristics, drawing us closer to God.

Becoming an image of our Beloved, in this case, is impossible. No matter how much we try, we can never possess the Graciousness, the Mercy, the Compassion, or any of the other stated attributes of Allah the Almighty. But if we can begin even to reflect one minuscule fraction, we may be able to spread some good in this world and simultaneously strengthen our bond and love for God. Our hyper-perception of ourselves, to the point of madness, as is the case in much of the aforesaid atheistic Western philosophies, is minimized through such a bond. We are no longer lonely beings who are condemned to love without the promise of eternity.

When love is enduring, it only makes sense for our beloved to be equally enduring.

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Staying Away from Committing Sin

Fareeha Haroon

The human soul has a natural affinity towards its Creator. Love for its Master is inculcated in the soul. Worldly pursuits and influences may dampen the longing to see its Lord, but this desire is rekindled whenever the effects of this world fade. God is the Creator of everything in this world and all of the creation naturally bends towards Him. As the Holy Qur'an says: "And when thy Lord brings forth from Adam's children—out of their loins—their offspring and makes them witnesses against their own selves by saying: 'Am I not your Lord?' They say, 'Yea, we do bear witness.' This He does lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were surely unaware of this'" (1).

Despite this natural desire to see God, we struggle in this world by falling prey to the sinful inclinations in our hearts. Islam guides its followers onto the right path to achieve God's love. On the one hand, it asks us to do good, and on the other hand, it commands us to stay away from sins. Sin is a digression from the straight path. It is a disruption in the normal course of life. When one sets foot on the road to win God's love, the first step is to change one's ways, shun the life of sin, and move away from all wrongdoings. It is essential to be successful in this quest. If one is able to abandon a life of immorality and is able to control oneself from committing sin, one becomes a recipient of God's blessings. According to the Holy Qur'an: "Say, 'O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls, despair not of the mercy of Allah, surely Allah forgives all sins. Verily, He is Most Forgiving, Merciful'" (2). It must be noted that not committing sin is the first step in the journey of winning God's love. In the beginning, one may trip and fall prey to evil inclinations, yet God will forgive a person if they are sincerely repentant and remorseful. Man must go through a complete transformation by discarding sin. He will have to cease all actions that can harm his life, property, and honor, as well as of other persons; even the mere thought of doing harm will have to be abandoned. The abandonment of sinful ways is in fact a crucial aspect in man's journey to fulfill the purpose of his creation. He will have to regulate his natural instincts and must use

his faculties at the right time and occasion. He must tame his natural urges so that they turn into morals. Yet human beings still digress and succumb to evil inclinations. They believe in God and are aware of the punishment of sins and yet are tempted constantly by evil. This happens because their knowledge lacks depth and true recognition of God Almighty.

The real and most effective way to get rid of sin is to attain true recognition of Allah Almighty. The mere utterance of a few words or offering of soulless worship will not grant deliverance. One may have a firm belief in the existence of God but still lack true awareness. In the words of Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as): "A life of sin is, after all, worse than death. In answer to this, I say, on the basis of my own personal experience, that from the birth of man to these final days of the world there has been only one way of avoiding sin and disobedience. When man attains true recognition of God, through categorical arguments and luminous signs, and is virtually able to behold Him, he comes to realize that Divine wrath is a consuming fire; and when God manifests His beauty to him, he realizes that in Him lies perfect bliss. All the veils between him and Divine majesty and beauty are thus lifted, and this alone can check egoistical passions and bring about true reformation" (3).

We would not knowingly go near anything that appears to be harmful. No one would deliberately put their hand in a fire or in the mouth of a snake. Yet, even if we say we know there exists possible punishment for wrongdoing, still we are prone to stumble and to give in to satanic desires. This is because our knowledge is superficial and lacks true realization. When a person attains the true realization of the existence of God, that there is one God who is powerful enough to punish or to reward as He wills, he refrains from committing sin.

Christianity offers its own unique path to salvation from sin. Christians believe that Jesus (as) sacrificed his life and blood to save his followers from a life of sin. As such, salvation is not seen as something to be earned but as a

'free gift' from Jesus (after a Christian has accepted him as the Son of God); this gift is then referred to as 'grace'. On the other hand, Islam presents a realistic concept of salvation. It is only the true love and recognition of God that can save us from a life of sin and moral degradation. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (as) says: "Once you have been filled with conviction, you should flow forth like a river, cleanse yourself of the filth of doubt and suspicion and distance yourselves from sin. This is the water that will wash away all traces of sin and purify your hearts and prepare you to mold yourselves into the image of God. You can never obliterate the inscriptions of the ego from the slate of your hearts unless you wash it with the clear water of certainty. Make a resolution so that you may be given strength and seek so that you may be provided for. Soften your hearts so that you may understand these things, for a hardhearted person is not likely to comprehend them. Do you imagine that you can truly hate sin unless your hearts have been filled with the majesty of God, and you have been made cognizant of the glory and power of the Living One, and your hearts have been filled with the light of certainty? No. There is only one way, just as there is only One God and one Law" (4).

Another unique feature of Islam is that it keeps its gates of mercy and forgiveness open forever. Whenever anyone wants to leave the life of sin and moral degradation, God the Merciful welcomes him with open arms. Not all religions hold the same view of how to bring about the betterment of a person. Hinduism advocates full punishment, even though the wrongdoer may be repentant, wanting to turn over a new leaf. In other words, it is considered humane to forgive fellow beings, yet it is not considered an attribute of God Almighty to show benevolence to the repentant. Christianity provides the idea of atonement while Hinduism is trapped in the claws of reincarnation. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as), explains forgiveness of sin in these words: "Also, the Holy Quran does not admit in principle, the concept that for the sake of atonement, the burden of a sinful person can be transferred to another innocent being. Likewise human logic does not accept the notion either, that for the sin of Tom, Dick should be indicted. Even worldly governments have never subscribed to this notion. Alas, as far as the concept of atonement is concerned, the Aryas have also

committed the same mistake as has been committed by the Christians. They too have missed the mark. According to the Arya doctrine, both repentance and seeking forgiveness are utterly meaningless. Reincarnation being the prescribed punishment in Arya doctrine, they believe that unless a person is subjected to various reincarnations for having committed even a single crime, atonement is simply impossible" (5). In the end, when a sinner shuns his irreligious or immoral lifestyle and bends towards God with a repentant heart and true recognition of Him, God's Graciousness engulfs him.

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (as) says: "When a man turns towards God Almighty with such sincerity and firm resolve, then God, who is Benevolent and Merciful, forgives him that particular sin. It is one of the high Divine attributes that God accepts repentance and saves a sinner from ruin. If man had not the hope of his repentance being accepted, he would not be able to refrain from sinning" (6).

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Charity in the Way of God

Fazal Masood Malik



Humans are known to be generous, cooperative, and altruistic beings. We help strangers even at a cost to ourselves. Islam, being a faith of nature, emphasizes generosity, which comes in many forms, from charitable donations to volunteering, helping a stranger, and caring for loved ones. We often aid people in crises, be it through a food bank, blood bank, or in aid of a disaster on the other side of the world, even though we will unlikely meet the people we are helping. According to the Islamic doctrine, all wealth ultimately belongs to Allah the Almighty. As His creation, we are simply repaying from the bounties bestowed upon us.

In all religions, particularly in Islam, giving has been linked with the duty to pray. There is no separation between the two. Looking back at history, we find that in Greek and Roman cultures, the well-off elements of society were not expected to support or help the poor. While the word philanthropy is of Greek origin, the object of such actions were people of one's own family and guests, not the poor. Even the ancient Greek moralists did not admonish people to concern themselves about the fate of the poor.

Not all ancient religions discarded the poor. The seven principles of the Goddess Ma'at guided ancient Egyptians (1). They had an obligation to support the cause of those without either power or possessions. Care for the poor and sick has been part of Taoism and Confucianism since the Sung Dynasty (960–1279). Zoroastrianism was an ethical religion with strong social components from the outset.

With the arrival of Judaism, however, giving charity for the sake of God became a significant duty and a virtue. We find this duty forming a central part in the Torah and in the biblical writings of Prophets that followed.

The Torah urges the children of Israel to be generous towards the poor in their midst. The prophets repeatedly warn against oppressing the poor and the needy (2).

In the Holy Qur'an, several verses establish the importance of charity (3), and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) is a glorious example of charitable works (4). Zakat, a form of mandatory donation, is the third pillar of Islam, together with the commitment to faith, fasting, prayer, and pilgrimage, signifying the centrality of charity in Islam. While interpretation and practice of voluntary donations vary, a common core unites all practices forming this Islamic tradition.

The first and the foremost aim of Islam is the achievement of the well-being of humanity in this world and the next (5). The Holy Qur'an lays down a comprehensive, multi-layered concept of welfare as it refers to spiritual, moral, and socioeconomic well-being in this world and success in the Hereafter. In general, Muslims believe that society should achieve a common and public good.

Charity is the most necessary means towards the public good. It does not only refer to voluntary donations, but a multitude of deserving causes qualify as giving in the way of God.

The Prophet Muhammad (sa) advised that much attention should be paid to the education of the people and the bringing up of orphans by stating that “whoever looks after an orphan will be ‘like two fingers with him in paradise’ (6).

Assistance to refugees and displaced people is also a common task undertaken by non-denominational charities, such as Humanity First. For example, when the Prophet Muhammad (sa) migrated to Madinah, he and his followers sought refuge in the houses of the inhabitants of Medina.

According to another Hadith (saying of the Holy Prophet (sa)), the concept of cooperation and responsibility for fellow Muslims is stressed by the Prophet Muhammad (sa) in these words: “In mutual compassion, love, and kindness you will find the faithful like a body so that if one part feels pain, the whole body responds with wakefulness and fever” (7).

Regarding cooperation and responsibility on a social level to all human beings, the Holy Qur’an stresses that righteousness cannot be attained by the proper observance of the rituals only; it also requires acts of compassion and kindness. The test of true belief and genuine worship leads to compassionate living. “It is not righteousness that you turn your faces to the East or the West, but truly righteous is he who believes in Allah and the Last Day and the angels and the Book and the Prophets, and spends his money for love of Him, on the kindred and the orphans and the needy and the wayfarer and those who ask for charity, and for ransoming the captives” (8).



Regarding responsibilities to orphans, Surah al-Baqarah states, “And they ask thee concerning the orphans. Say: ‘Promotion of their welfare is an act of great goodness. And if you intermix with them, they are your brethren. And Allah knows the mischief-maker from the reformer. And if Allah had so willed, He would have put you to hardship. Surely, Allah is Mighty, Wise’” (9).

There is also advice for the protection of rights of refugees in the Holy Qur’an, for example, Surah al-Hashr states, “And those who had established their home in this city (Madinah) before them and had accepted faith, love those who came to them for refuge, and find not in their breasts any desire for that which is given them (refugees), but prefer the refugees to themselves, even though poverty be their own lot. And whoso is rid of the covetousness of his own soul — it is these who will be successful” (10).

Surah an-Nisa also quotes the significance of welfare work in these words, “And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbour that is a kinsman and the neighbour that is a stranger, and the companion by your side, and the wayfarer, and those whom your right hands possess. Surely, Allah loves not the proud and the boastful” (11).



Charitable giving is deemed one of the most important obligations in Islam, which impacts the well-being of an individual and the welfare of society as a whole. Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian (as), the founder of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, has expressed charitable giving and caring for the human condition elegantly by stating, "It is our principle to have sympathy for the whole of mankind. If a person sees that fire has broken out in the house of a Hindu neighbour and he does not get up to help in putting it out, I tell you truly that he is not of me. If one of my followers sees a Christian being killed and does not go to his assistance to rescue him, then I tell you quite truly that he is not of us. I say it on oath that I have no enmity with any people" (12).

Charity is a central tenet of Islam, advocating that all wealth (monetary and non-monetary, such as health, time, etc.) belongs to God. Therefore, Muslims are obliged to share their wealth with those less fortunate. Charity, in ways however small, confers greater happiness upon us. In these acts of giving, we should never fear a lack of means. A generous spirit is itself great wealth. In all giving that is done selflessly, there is present the hand of God who multiplies it and returns it increased manifold.

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Remaining Patient and Steadfast During Trials

Rumana Ashraf

There are times when misfortune and conflicts test us as human beings. Trials and tribulations are known to shape current matters and future realities. It is through experiencing divergent situations and managing struggles that personal outlooks and perspectives are defined.

Showing patience and steadfastness in times of difficulty can bring about a tremendous sense of honor, respect, and calm. Appropriateness in the manner of speaking, of listening, and of body language has a significant effect on the result of a conflict and its potential resolutions. Handling situations with hostility, aggression, and ignorance naturally will yield different results than if one were to approach a problem with open-mindedness, patience, and prayers. Oftentimes it can be an attempt to suppress anger and the desire to act rashly; however, that is the time when one should reflect on the situation and strive to calm flustered emotions.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) is reported to have said that showing patience during difficult times elevates an individual's honor. He is also reported to have said that a strong person is the one who can control his anger and not the one who wrestles down another. In times of great adversity and struggle, it was the Holy Prophet (sa), and indeed, all the Prophets of God, who displayed exemplary perseverance in the face of immeasurable problems and obstacles.

The Holy Qur'an provides the following prayer for those who are patient in adversity: "Who, when a misfortune overtakes them, say 'Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return'" (1).

By emulating the example of the Holy Prophet (sa), we, too, can strive to show endurance, determination, and steadfastness in our daily lives. Allah the Almighty carefully created the human anatomy in a way that, both mentally and physically, it has the potential to endure trials with stamina and persistence. Allah the

Almighty designed the human brain to regulate mood and cognitive function in response to stressful situations. Chronic exposure to stress can result in the need for long-term management. In psychological terms, there are certain measures that human beings employ to manage stress, called coping mechanisms. Exploring this topic further, there are adaptive coping mechanisms and maladaptive coping mechanisms. Adaptive mechanisms are efforts made to relieve stress that is healthy for the body and expects a positive outcome. Some examples include exercise, therapy, humor, and positive reframing. Healthy ways of dealing with stress can also include working on a project, spending time with family, or taking a walk outside. Productive and engaging hobbies, sports, and interests that brighten the mind and encourage a sense of peace and structured healing have a way of managing stress in the best of ways. Maladaptive mechanisms are strategies used to manage stress that can prove harmful to the body and yield a negative outcome. Examples of these include irrational denial, substance abuse, and self-harm.

Meditation is a type of adaptive coping mechanism that facilitates a sense of tranquility, peace, and balance. It reflects the quality of displaying patience and steadfastness by encouraging a sense of mindfulness. The practice of Salat (daily prescribed prayer in Islam) yields remarkably similar benefits in that it encourages correct posture, increases circulation, and improves concentration through the cyclical movements involved in prayer and worship. The Holy Prophet (sa) is reported to have said: "verily there is a cure in Salat" (2). When analyzing the postures that are performed in Salat, it is important to note that the physical limbs actively move while the brain is simultaneously engaged in concentration and coordination. As the physical body shifts from one position to another, the mind shifts from reciting one prescribed prayer to another. This action of recalling and reciting prayers in combination with moving the body from standing erect in its highest point down to full prostration on the ground

encourages the most perfect sense of health for the mind, body, and soul. Channeling mindfulness through prayer and narrowing attention to focus on spirituality is the best way to create a harmonious internal and external atmosphere for the physical self. Salat and prayer to God with focus are undoubtedly the most incredible and effective ways to practice and enhance patience and steadfastness during times of ease and, especially, of difficulty.

As explained above, the presence of conflicts and negative experiences has a unique way of testing us and our perceived perspective of situations. It is through

mindfulness, patience, and appropriate stress-reducing interventions that we can be encouraged to manage these difficulties with more ease. It is also important to understand that a life without strife or difficulty is not the purpose of human existence, rather it is the presence of our determination and willingness to push through and reach God that is the ultimate goal of our life. In the same way that diamonds are formed under intense heat and pressure so, too, are human beings capable of becoming gems by displaying strength, steadfastness, and patience in the face of adversity and trying times.

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How to Win God's Love: Women's Perspective

Shazia Shakur Sohail

All the avenues of pleasing God that are open to men are also open to women, as is said in the Holy Qur'an: "Surely, men who submit themselves to God and women who submit themselves to Him, and believing men and believing women, and obedient men and obedient women, and truthful men and truthful women, and men steadfast in their faith and steadfast women, and men who are humble and women who are humble, and men who give alms and women who give alms, and men who fast and women who fast, and men who guard their chastity and women who guard their chastity, and men who remember Allah much and women who remember Him, Allah has prepared for all of them forgiveness and a great reward" (1).

Some may think that there are times when women are held back from doing God's work in order to take care of their children and homes. In fact, women during the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) were worried

about the same and sent Asma Bint Yazid as a spokesperson to him; she said: "May my parents be sacrificed for you! I have come to you as a representative of Muslim women. May my life be sacrificed for you! Women of the east and the west all agree with my view that Allah the Exalted has sent you with the truth for men and women and for us to accept you and also accept the God Who sent you. We women have been confined to homes. We facilitate the fulfillment of their [men's] wishes and look after their offspring. You men have the advantage over us of attending Friday Prayers, congregational Prayers, visiting the ailing, attending funerals, and going to Hajj. Above all, you also go to Jihad. When any of you goes to Hajj, Umrah, or Jihad, we look after your property, spin cotton for garments, and nurture your children. O' Prophet of Allah! Are we still not equally deserving of reward along with men?" The Holy Prophet (sa) turned his blessed countenance towards the Companions and said: 'Has any of you ever

heard anyone express themselves as finely as this woman regarding an issue of faith?' The Companions submitted: 'O Prophet of Allah! We never thought that a woman would have such (deep) thinking.' The Holy Prophet (sa) turned to her and said: 'O woman, return and inform every woman that for a woman to be a good wife, to be compliant to her husband, and to carry on according to his wishes is equal to all the virtues of men.' The woman returned delighted,

raising the words of 'There is none worthy of worship except Allah' and 'Allah is Great!'" (2).

In another narration, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa) said that a woman is the guardian of her home and will be held accountable for it (3).

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Establishing Peace and Justice

Masood Ashraf

Peace and justice are terms that were coined to define the state of being at tranquility and having an appropriate response to behaviors. The two terms often parallel each other in creating a harmonious state of living where both tranquility and due process are established. Historically it may be noted that civilizations with an established judicial system reigned for lengthy periods of time in prosperity and union throughout the centuries. It is interesting to note as well how, with time, different concepts of law and order evolved and progressed to match the increasing capacity of human intellect.

From 1792 BCE, at the time of early Mesopotamia, the ruler Hammurabi established a set of legal codes that governed Babylon. Hammurabi's belief of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" was the principle of Babylonian justice and ruled over all matters of trial and conflict. Penalties would be equal to the weight of the action; and so, a rigorous and straightforward sense of justice and equality presided over the civilization for many years. In ancient Greece, trials were held with opposing sides arguing their cases. Instead of lawyers, involved individuals would participate in civil debates themselves to rectify

situations. Jurors instead of judges were appointed to oversee the proceedings. In Rome, there were a set of rules known as the Twelve Tables that outlined the main framework for Rome's authority and order of community and people. This system of governance was in place for more than 1500 years and was often looked back to for reference in many modern countries today. Ancient China also had its own unique judicial system that paralleled its form of government. Chinese law was heavily influenced by the Confucian Codes of Conduct that focused on individual righteousness and morality without the need for the law to interfere in affairs. Hundreds of years later, the first centralized feudal system of government in China was formed in the Qin Dynasty (1).

During the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (sa), 1500 years ago, the Holy Qur'an was revealed that outlined clear and universal guidelines for law and order for all the people: "O ye who believe, be strict in observing justice, and be witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or against your parents and kindred. Whether he, against whom the witness is borne, be rich or poor, Allah is more regardful of them both than you are. Therefore, follow not your low

desires that you may be able to act equitably. And if you hide the truth or evade it, then know that Allah is Well-Aware of what you do" (2).

In an address at the National Peace Symposium in Canada, the worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), Khalifatul-Masih V, said: "In this verse, the Holy Qur'an demands the very highest possible standards of justice. It requires that Muslims should be willing to forgo all of their personal interests for the sake of the truth. Muslims are commanded to put aside their own desires or personal relationships and to be witnesses for the sake of Allah the Almighty. This verse instructs that a person must even be willing to testify against himself, his parents, and his loved ones in order to establish justice. Islam teaches that a Muslim's first loyalty must always be to the truth and so a person must never hide the facts or give false testimony. A person should not be governed by his own personal desires, as this leads to bias and prejudice and takes a person away from what is fair and what is right. This enlightened principle is the means to solve the problems of the world and to transform all forms of hatred into peace, tolerance, and mutual respect" (3). Furthermore, Allah directs Muslims in the Holy Qur'an to not only speak the truth and to be just but also to favor others" and "Allah enjoins justice, and the doing of good to others, and giving like kindred and forbids indecency and manifest evil and transgression. He admonishes you that you may take heed" (4).

The Internationalist Magazine of September 18, 2018, outlined ten steps to world peace. Interestingly enough, the very first thing outlined was "stamping out exclusion" providing access to justice for all equally without exclusion. The third remedy they listed was "Share out wealth fairly," and they quote: "According to world bank survey 40 percent of those who join rebel groups do so because of a lack of economic opportunities. Relative poverty is just as important, with more equal societies marked by high levels of trust and low levels of violence. Economic fairness when it comes to public resources, taxation, and tax evasion is also key. The systematic transfer of wealth from rich to poor – instead of the other way around – improves security for everyone." The tenth remedy they mentioned was "look within" and they quote: "Peace starts with you. Ordinary citizens can make a difference. When's the last time you said sorry? Think about who loses when you win. Are the people around you heard and respected, or marginalized, ignored, and left out? Make a decision to care about what happens to them. Start a constructive conversation with someone you disagree with. Challenge 'them-and-us' thinking in yourself as well as in others. Every one of us can choose to make society more just and peaceful, or more unjust and warlike" (5).

His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad, addressing the European Parliament in Brussels in 2012, states: "I should also mention that there are multiple aspects of 'peace' and 'security'. As every individual facet is



His Holiness, Mirza Masroor Ahmad(aba), addressing the European Parliament in Brussels in 2012

important in its own right, at the same time the way each aspect interlinks is also extremely important. For example, the basic building block for peace in society is tranquility and harmony within the family home. The situation within a home is not limited but has a knock-on effect on the peace of the local area, which in turn affects the peace of the wider town or city. If there is a disturbance in the home it will negatively affect the local area and that will affect the town or city. In the same way, the state of the town or city affects the peace of the entire country, and ultimately the state of a nation affects the peace and harmony of the region or the entire world. Therefore, it is clear that if you wish to discuss even a single aspect of peace, you will find that its scope is not limited, but will continue to expand. In a similar way, we find that where there is a lack of peace, different methods are required to solve

the issue, based on the underlying problems that exist and upon the particular aspects of peace and security that have been violated" (6).

As explained above by His Holiness, Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba), it is important to understand that in order for peace to flourish, justice and equality must be prioritized and implemented to ensure a balance between authority and harmony. Justice and peace work best in unison and are complementary to each other in multiple ways that have evidently been witnessed throughout history and civilization. The cultivation of our modern judicial system and its effect on the welfare of the public has been advanced from past rules of government into a new era, but not nearly enough. Until absolute justice can be established, there can be no peace.

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poetry CORNER

Love of God

A poem by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi

Taken from "Precious Pearls," Page 10, by Waheed Ahmad (English translation of Durre-e-Sameen written by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(as))

*I cannot rest a single breath without Thee;
It chokes my life, like the gasping of an indisposed.*

*What's the clamor in Thy lane, pray to find it quickly,
Lest some lovelorn lover may lose his life!*

*Come quick, Supporter mine; grief's burden is heavy;
Pray, hide not Thy Visage; this is my very cure.*

*Pray rid me of my grief by showing Thy Face
How long shall last such days of teasing us?*

*Without Thee, my Soul, this life is but naught;
Better than such living is to die and turn to dust.*

NEWS, VIEWS, & REVIEWS



Man beaten to death for 'sacrilege' attempt at Sikh Golden Temple in India



GETTY IMAGES | The Golden Temple is Sikhism's pre-eminent spiritual site

Police in the Indian city of Amritsar say a man suspected of trying to commit a sacrilegious act at Sikhism's holiest shrine has been beaten to death.

The incident took place during a prayer service at the city's Golden Temple on Saturday, according to local media.

The man allegedly barged into the inner sanctum, where Sikhism's holy book, the Guru Granth Sahib, is kept.

He then grabbed a ceremonial sword placed next to the book, but was overpowered by guards and worshippers.

Sikhs regard the Guru Granth Sahib as not just the holy scripture of their religion but also as the living Guru, and believe it should be treated with respect as a human might be.

The scuffle took place at around 17:45 local time (11:45 GMT), and was captured on camera as evening prayers were being broadcast on television.

It is unclear exactly what happened next. Police said the man was found dead once officers arrived at the scene, and an investigation is under way.

Less than 24 hours later, another man was beaten to death by Sikhs accusing him of sacrilege after he allegedly tried to remove the Sikh flag, Nishan Sahib, from a temple in Kapurthala, also in Punjab state.

Indian media report police initially took the man into custody but locals then clashed with police and ended up killing the man.

Punjab state's police chief tweeted that "Stern action will be taken against all those disturbing the law and order in Punjab" after the "unfortunate incidents" in Amritsar and Kapurthala.

In a tweet after the Golden Temple incident, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi said he had ordered police to "zero in" on the "underlying motive and real conspirators behind this dastardly act".

The incident comes only days after another man was apprehended for allegedly throwing a small Sikh holy book, the Gutka Sahib, into a man-made pool surrounding the temple.

The desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib is a highly emotive issue among the Sikh community.

Several desecrations took place in 2014 and 2015, and it became a major political issue during Punjab's elections in 2017 and 2019.

The ruling Congress party has been criticized by political opponents, and many Sikhs, for failing to bring justice to previous offenders of desecrations. Balwinder Bhunder, an MP for opposition party Akali Dal, condemned the latest incident on Saturday, telling local outlet NDTV that it was a deliberate attempt "to weaken Punjab, which is the sword arm of India".

"Some people have made it a political game over the last five years," he added.

RNS Religion News Service

Can Pope Francis make real change for women? Vatican women leaders assess his chances

December 16, 2021
By, Claire Giangravé



People listen to Pope Francis, white figure on stage, during his weekly general audience in Paul VI Hall, at the Vatican, Sept. 8, 2021. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

VATICAN CITY (RNS) — A panel of women who have attained leadership positions in the Catholic Church met on Thursday (Dec. 16) to discuss Pope Francis' ambitious plan to reform the power structures in the church, raising questions about female ordination, the role of bishops and the need for women theologians.

In October, Francis launched a churchwide consultation process titled "For a synodal Church —

Communion, Participation and Mission," commonly known as the Synod on Synodality. The three-year process, which will conclude with a summit of bishops at the Vatican in 2023, is intended to engage every level of the Catholic Church, from parishes to bishops' conferences.

The pope's project, if successful, is poised to increase the participation of the most marginalized groups in the church, including women.

"Our role is to invite more and more women in, into the process, into the conversation and reflection," said Sr. Patricia Murray, executive secretary of the International Union of Superiors General and a member of the spirituality commission of the Synod. "Particularly those who feel very much neglected, or that the church has forgotten about them or feel estranged from the church."

Hosted by the Australian embassy to the Holy See, Georgetown University and the Jesuit magazine *Civiltà Cattolica*, Thursday's "Women in Synodality" event also included Sr. Nathalie Bequart, the first female undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops; Myriam Wijlens, one of the church's few female canon lawyers and a consultant to the Synod of Bishops.

At the meeting there were also Sr. Béatrice Faye, a member of the Theological Commission of the synod and member of the Groupe Africain de Recherche en Philosophie Interculturelle, and Susan Pascoe, who works on the Methodology Commission of the Synod and is the President of the Australian Council for International Development.

Many of those following the event via Zoom voiced doubts about how much women will be heard in the synodal process, and particularly whether bishops will accept the shared decision-making that Francis envisions.

"These are very important questions," replied Wijlens. "What does it mean to be a bishop in a synod?" She noted that when bishops convene at the Vatican, they express not their own views, she added, but they have a responsibility to give voice to the joys and the challenges of the faithful in their community.

"Theologically the idea would be that the bishop would be a witness to the faith of his own church and not speak of his own faith," Wijlens said. "I do hope the bishops have the courage and the braveness to say: 'This is what the people in my church believe and what they want to share with the rest of the community.'"

In 2018, *America* magazine published a groundbreaking study by the Georgetown University Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate, or CARA, which showed that more than 70% of young women in the United States were drifting away from the Catholic Church, and at a much higher rate than men.

The report found that 38% of the respondents left because they disagreed with church teaching, while 23% objected to the status of women in the church. More than four years after *America's* report, many more women occupy leadership roles in the church and at the Vatican, but little has changed in terms of linking the traditions of the faith into the concerns of modern-day women.

Wijlens said that the church can do more than listen; she suggested that promoting female theologians and canon lawyers might deepen the understanding of traditional Catholic beliefs about gender.

"I think we are losing in the church a high number of highly trained women, and it's because they feel that they are not being heard," she said, suggesting that canon law faculties should reach out to women and help them achieve this expensive and specialized training.

Murray talked about recent reports of physical, sexual and psychological abuse of religious sisters, reports that have also undermined the credibility of the church's commitment to women. "If we do not listen to the pain that has been suffered, we won't see where we are individually called to change and called to conversion," she said. "I think if we fail to do that, the synodal journey will seem to be incomplete."

Murray also said that it's important for the synod to address female ordination and the diaconate for

women, topics usually set aside when discussing the role of women in the church.

While Francis has said that the ordination of women to the priesthood is out of the question, he created two commissions to study the possibility of women becoming deacons, who may not perform the sacraments but serve at Mass and preach the homily. "We are looking at a reevaluation of all the roles in the Catholic Church," Murray said, especially when it comes to different forms of ministry in various parts of the world. "It's a long journey," she added, and "this is not for the faint hearted, it's not for quick and easy answers."



The secularizing shifts in American society show no signs of slowing. The latest Pew Research Center survey of the U.S. religious composition finds the religiously unaffiliated share of the public is 6 percentage points higher than it was five years ago and 10 points higher than a decade ago.

About three-in-ten U.S. adults (29%) now are religious "nones" – people who describe themselves as atheists, agnostics or "nothing in particular" when asked about their religious identity. Self-identified Christians of all varieties (including Protestants, Catholics, members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Orthodox Christians) make up 63% of the adult population, down from 75% a decade ago. In addition, the share of U.S. adults who say they pray daily has been trending downward, as has the share who say religion is "very important" in their lives.

COMMENT

The Muslim Sunrise



In an era when myspace.com was booming, 2007 was a year when the concept of “nones” began to rise. “Nones” refers to those who identified themselves as religiously unaffiliated. A simple correlation can be made between the rise of “nones” with the birth and rise of the internet. As the years went by, more and more people began to disassociate from organized religion. In 2019, “nones” had risen to 26% and this steady incline is reflective of the nearly one in ten Americans in 2021 who identify as “religiously unaffiliated”. In Islam, the rise of materialism leads to a steady decline in spirituality. Meaning, a pull from the world takes a person away from God. And this is more relevant today in our fast-paced digital world than ever before. The masses have been engulfed in a never-ending cycle of wants versus necessity. Even in the middle of the pandemic, it seems that a great number of people are more concerned with luxury living and supply chain disruption of trinkets and flashy gizmos than in helping to fill the gap of the ever-growing need that people have with respect to hunger and medicine. The wealth gap has continued to grow which always paves a road to dissension and envy. Morally uplifting society is a genuine remedy against such a pull away from charitable pursuits and spiritual growth. The worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, his Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba) said:

“We are living in a time of ever-rising materialism and worldliness where, despite being intelligent and despite having eyes to see with, most people are living a life of spiritual and moral blindness in which they consider anything that shimmers or glistens to be made of gold.

The world will be forced to admit that the riches of the world have left them spiritually penniless and morally bankrupt” (1).



The worldwide head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, his Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad (aba)

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Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah's (as) Love for God

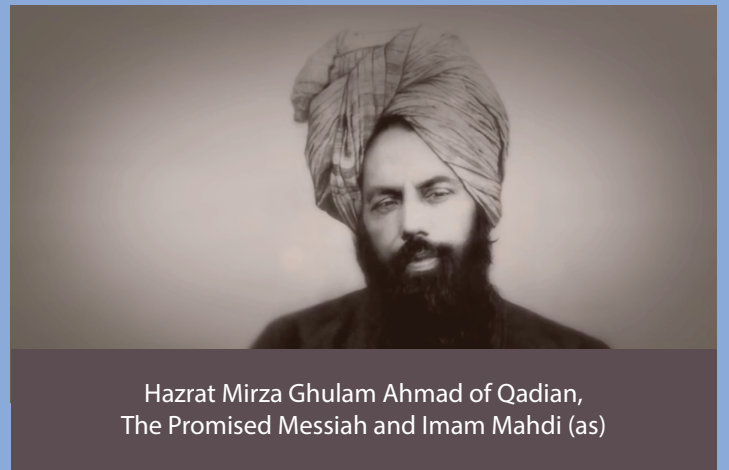
Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi (as), expressed his love for Allah the Exalted incessantly throughout his life. One small example of this may be seen in the words that he wrote in private on a page of a notebook that was found after his demise by his son, Hazrat Mirza Bashiruddin Mahmood Ahmad, Musleh Mau'ud, Khalifatul-Masih II (ra).

Each word of that note clearly expresses the love that the Promised Messiah (as) had in his heart for Allah the Exalted. These are the words that he wrote in seclusion at a time when a humble servant of God was conversing alone with his Lord, and no one else; when he knew without a doubt that no third person was there with him and his God.

At such a time, a person tries to infuse power into his words to express the love that exists deep in his heart. He is well aware that no one knows the condition of his heart better than his Lord, yet still, he tries to express his love in the form of words, so that he

himself may comprehend the depth of his feelings. These words, written by Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, the Promised Messiah (as), at such a time of seclusion from the world, loudly express how much he was in love with God:

"O, my Lord! My dear Master! My Beloved, adorable God! The world tells me that I am a non-believer! But can I find anyone dearer to me than You that I may leave You? When people are unaware of the world, and my foes and my friends do not have the least idea of my condition, at that time I see that You wake me up and say to me most affectionately and lovingly that I should not worry at all; You are with me. Then, my Lord! Under such benevolent grace from You, how is it possible that I could leave You?!? Never, never!"



Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian,
The Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi (as)

What is the Love of Allah?

Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, The Promised Messiah (as) says:

"Love is not pretense or ritualistic, rather it is a faculty among human faculties. Its reality is that the heart likes something and is drawn to it. Just as the real qualities of something are made evident when it reaches a state of excellence, so is the case of love. Its treasures are made apparent when it reaches its climax and highest point. In fact, when a person completely loves someone, it is as if he permeates him or consumes him and is imbued with his morals and manners. The greater the love, the more one is naturally drawn to the qualities of his beloved so much so that he becomes an image of the beloved. This is also the indication when a man loves God, he attains God's light on a reflective basis in accordance with his own powers."

Nurul Haq, Part II, Ruhani Khaza'in, vol. 9, p. 430



DECLARATION OF INITIATION
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
أَشْهَدُ أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ وَأَشْهَدُ أَنَّ مُحَمَّدًا عَبْدُهُ وَرَسُولُهُ
I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah.
* He is one and has no partner.
* And I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and messenger.
Enter this day the Ahmadiyya Jama't in Islam at the hand of Masroor.
the firm faith, that Hazrat Muhammad (peace & blessings of Allah be upon him)

10 Conditions of *Bai'at*

On December 1st, 1888, the Promised Messiah (as) published an announcement that God had ordained him that whomsoever sought true faith and piety, should pledge allegiance to him so that Allah may shower His mercy and beneficence on them.

- 1** That till the last day of his life, he shall abstain from *shirk* (associating any partners with Allah).
- 2** That he shall keep away from falsehood, cruelty, adultery, dishonesty, disorder, rebellion and every kind of evil.
- 3** That he shall offer prayers (*Salat*) five times daily.
- 4** That he shall not inflict injury on any of *Allah's* creatures.
- 5** That he shall bear every hardship for the sake of *Allah*.
- 6** That he shall not follow vulgar customs, and shall guard against evil inclinations.
- 7** That he shall discard pride and haughtiness, live in humility & meekness
- 8** That he shall hold his faith, dignity, and the welfare of Islam dearer than his own life, wealth and children.
- 9** That he shall have sympathy for all of God's creatures, and devote his talents to their welfare.
- 10** That he shall establish brotherhood with him (i.e., Ahmad), obeying him in all good things, and firmly adhere to these rules until the last breath of his life.

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